

more. A younger brother still was captured by the Spaniards, settled in Mexico, and grew rich; his wealth reminded the Church that he was a heretic; he was forced to leave his wife, children, and all he possessed, and flee to Honduras, where he founded, if not a new fortune, at all events a new family. For it appears from the *Belize Advertiser* of January 1840 that, fantastic as it sounds, the author of *The Parish Register* was the probably unsuspecting uncle of a colony of little black Crabbes beyond the Atlantic. His own boyhood was uneventful; but the touch of poetry was already there. His father, though by profession a revenue-collector (like the father of Horace, two thousand years before) and in charge of the salt duties at Aldborough, had tastes not only for mathematics, but for verse as well, and would read Milton and Young in the evenings to his family; further, he took in *Martins Philosophical Magazine*, a journal with a Poet's Corner which the father flung aside and the son learnt by heart. This boyish habit has left its mark on that curious poem Crabbe wrote years after, called *The Newspaper*, with its description of such newspaper poets:

This Poet's Corner is die place they choose,
A fatal nursery for an infant Muse;
Unlike that Corner where true Poets lie,
These cannot live, and *they* shall never die.

Fortunately, Crabbe's own 'infant Muse' found a healthier nursery than this elsewhere in Aldborough, among its old wives and ancient mariners. From them the future story-teller was already in his boyhood gathering his material:

They told of days where many goes to one

—
Such days as ours; and how a larger sun,
Red, but not flaming, roll'd with motion
slow,
On the world's edge, but never dropp'd
below.